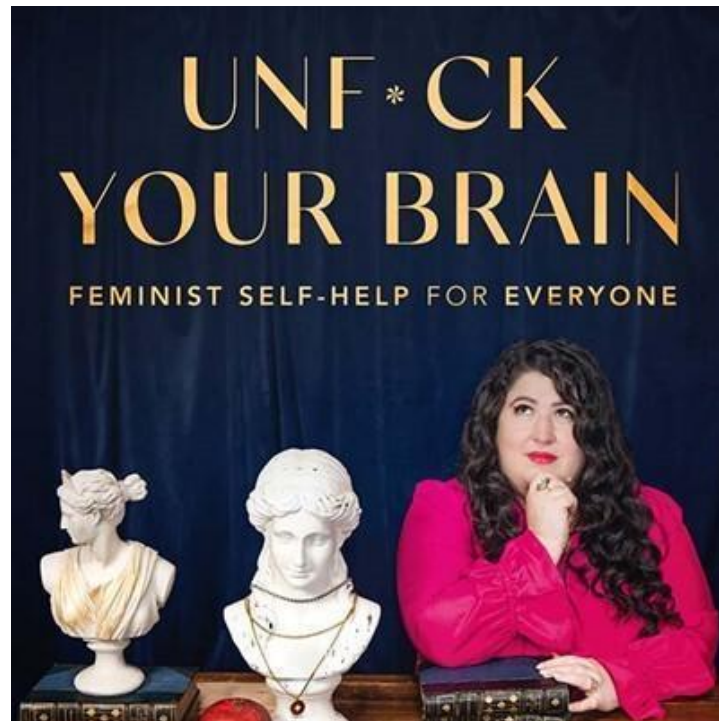


UFYB 405: Coaching Hotline: Fear of Being Single & Being Happy Alone



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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Welcome to UnF*ck Your Brain. I'm your host, Kara Loewentheil, Master Certified Coach and founder of The School of New Feminist Thought. I'm here to help you turn down your anxiety, turn up your confidence, and create a life on your own terms, one that you're truly excited to live. Let's go.

Welcome to this week's Coaching Hotline episode where I answer real questions from real listeners and coach you from afar. If you want to submit your question for consideration, go to unfuckyourbrain.com/coachinghotline, all one word. Or text your email to 1-347-997-1784. And when you get prompted for the code word, it's CoachingHotline, all one word. Let's get into this week's questions.

Here is the first question. "Hi, Kara. First, thank you for all that you do. I have been working through the end of my relationship. I have found the anxiety and control teachings really useful. I'm trying to apply the teaching that we only want what we think we want because of the thoughts and feelings we think we'll have. When I think about what I would think being with her as I want it, my thoughts are, "This is wonderful, she's amazing, this is everything I want, life couldn't be better than this." The feelings are loved, content, peaceful, happy. I'm struggling to work out how I can believe these thoughts in my life alone. I can think my life is amazing and often believe it, but it doesn't create the same warm glow feeling as when she was around. I wonder, are some things not just inherently pleasurable to us individually? For me, sunsets, ice cream, being near this person, and we can't create that exact pleasure in our minds alone."

Okay. So, number one, you are not thinking the same thoughts now that you were thinking then. Be careful not to make this confusing for yourself. It's not a mystery. You were thinking, "This is everything I want, life couldn't be better than this." You are now thinking, "I don't have everything I want, and my life could be better than this," right? So, of course, it doesn't feel as good.

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You see what I'm saying? I think you're subconsciously eliding some of this because you're like, "Well, I used to think this is wonderful, and now I sometimes still think my life is wonderful, but I don't feel the same." You were having thoughts like, "This is everything I want, and life couldn't be better than this." And now that's not what you're thinking. You're thinking, "I don't have everything I want because I want her, and my life can be better than this if I had her," right? So, of course, you're not feeling the same.

That's okay. You don't have to change it if you don't want to. But this is what happens, y'all, we try to make it so complicated, and we don't just stick with thought, feeling, action, result. And so then we're like, "Well, maybe there are things that live outside the model, or my thoughts don't make a difference." No, you're just not thinking the same thoughts. You don't believe that you have everything you want. You don't believe that your life couldn't be better right now. So, of course, it doesn't feel the same way as when you used to think and believe those things.

Okay? So that's number one. It doesn't create the same feeling because you're not thinking the same thoughts. And that's not because some things are just inherently pleasurable, it's because you're not thinking the same thoughts. Right? So then the second level of this is you think that thinking that "this is everything I want" or "life couldn't be better than this" are you observing the reality. Right? And so then you're like, "Well, I can't think that now because I don't have the thing."

This is what we all do, especially in relationships when we are people who fetishize romantic relationships and think that they cause our feelings. But people do it with everything, but I see this the most with romantic relationships. We think different thoughts when we're single. And when we're with the person and thinking positive thoughts like, "This is everything I want, life couldn't be better than this," we think that's just an observation of reality. And then we're like, "Well, I can't think it and believe it now

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because I don't have the person." But that's where the deepest, brain-blowing level of thought work is.

What if your life now was everything you wanted? What if you chose to want exactly the life you have? Right? There's that old cliché that's like, it's better to want what you have than to try to get what you want or something. But don't just react to that with a knee-jerk, "but it's not because I don't have her" or "I don't have a partner" or whatever. Really try to think about it. Whether or not your life is everything you want is actually just an optional thought. It's not a reality that you're observing.

What if you decided that your life was everything you wanted? What if you chose to want exactly the life you have? That is an option. You can choose that on purpose. You can choose to want exactly the life you have. And that is a skill that will serve you whether you're in a relationship or out of it, because you'll always have whatever life you have. And so knowing how to want what you have on purpose will never not be useful.

So, that's going to break your brain if you really let it, and if your brain doesn't feel broken, then you need to listen again, and you may not be ready to hear what I'm saying. But when you feel a certain way because of your thoughts about a circumstance, another way to say this is actually a very basic thing I teach you. When you feel a certain way because of your thoughts about the circumstance, the circumstance isn't causing those thoughts. Your brain is. And when you observe that you are thinking those thoughts in the presence of the circumstance and you are then telling yourself life is amazing because I have these thoughts, when you say, "I can't believe them or think them when this person isn't here," what you're saying is, "my circumstance causes my thoughts."

Right? So listen, bottom line, you always get to decide. If you want to decide that some things are just inherently pleasurable to you individually and you can't create that mentally, you can believe that if you want. Put it in

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a model, see what result you get. I don't believe that anything just causes pleasure for us, bypassing the brain. Even you think about touch, the brain is what tells you, do I like that touch or not? Your partner touches you from behind in an empty house, and you think, "Oh, it's definitely them. I like them. That feels good." Someone touches you from behind, you don't know who it is, in a crowded place, you're like, "What was that?"

Your brain has to interpret all of that. The reason you can't create the same experience is that you don't believe the thoughts you had then about your life now. But that's a choice. I'm not saying it's a problem that you're making, it is just what brains do. But that's not because the circumstance caused your thoughts and feelings. Whenever you try to make thought work complicated for yourself, just ask yourself if you're trying to come up with another way of saying, "I think some circumstances do cause my feelings, though." Right? That's usually what's going on.

All right, y'all, I know you're as tired as I am of having the top podcasts in wellness or health and fitness categories be a bunch of dudes who don't know anything about socialization and who are not taking women's lived experiences into account. So if you are looking for ways to support the show and more importantly, make sure the show gets to more people, please leave us a review on Apple Podcast or Spotify. And bonus points if you include a few lines about the way you use thought work and self-coaching or anything you've learned from the podcast in your daily life. Those reviews are what teach the algorithms to show us to more new people. It helps us get new listeners all over the world. And I'll be reading one story from a recent review in each of these question-and-answer episodes.

Today's review is from M Hogs, and I hope that this person owns pigs because that is an adorable idea. Pig farm named M Hogs. Her subject was, "Love Kara." And here's her review. "Love the podcast, love the book, love her coaching program. I send this podcast to so many women. If I

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could only have one podcast on an island for the rest of my life, it's this one. Thanks, Kara.” I love the idea of being someone's desert island podcast. Thank you.

All right, second question. “Hi, Kara, I'm capable of easily identifying thoughts which are negative and unhealthy. I'm particularly familiar with an old thought pattern I've been having for the last decade about being single and all the self-loathing that comes with it. These thoughts created a lot of sadness in the past, but through thought work, I was able to improve my approach, but I haven't eradicated them completely. Every so often, especially when a relationship hasn't worked out, I just broke up with someone who I fell in love with and was our second chance. The same old thoughts return alongside the new thought of self-fulfilling my own prophecy of not having found a partner after all these years of wanting to meet someone. And I think now I'll never be able to change these old thoughts despite doing thought work and rationally understanding that these thoughts interfere with my otherwise fulfilled life.”

Okay, so here's the thing. CBT and thought work are not the same. They have some overlapping elements, of course. But thought work, especially the model we use, has the results line, which is a game changer. Okay? It is very important. And what's happening here, CBT generally kind of won't address, but thought work does in the sense that your thought about these thoughts is your problem. You think it's a problem that these old thoughts are coming up. And then you're blaming the thoughts for your outcome in relationships.

Those are thoughts. It's a thought to think it's a problem that the thoughts are coming up. It's a thought to believe something's gone wrong in your life and then blame it on that particular thought, right? And then to tell yourself you'll never be able to change them and to tell yourself that's a problem. All of those are optional thoughts. That's not just observing reality, right? The way you present this is, “Well, I've done CBT, so I know I can change my

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thoughts, and I've changed some thoughts about being single, but now I have a whole set of thoughts about my thinking. I have a whole set of thoughts about this pattern of thoughts, and those are all just true."

No, those are all thoughts that also can go on a model. Your thoughts about your thoughts are still just thoughts. This is why it's such a mind fuck to be a human, because we can have thoughts about our thoughts. But honest to God, 90% of the work that everyone needs to do is on their thoughts about their thoughts. But most of you skip that. You're just trying to work on the original thoughts, but your thoughts about the thoughts are creating a whole bunch of shame or anxiety or resistance or whatever before you can even get to the regular thoughts underneath.

So you need to do some thought work on all of this. Who cares if your thoughts come back? My brain still tells me that losing weight will solve all my problems. But I don't make that mean anything. I don't believe it's true. I don't think it's causing my experiences. I don't think it's causing my feelings really even at this point because I'm just like, okay, brain, it's enough.

I have a whole episode called Ghost Patterns that you should listen to if you haven't. This is normal that your brain will continue to have old thoughts. You get to decide what to think about that, what to make that mean, how much power to give those thoughts. It is possible that your brain will just always keep thinking some of those thoughts, but who cares? My brain still says that, but I don't act on them. So I don't get a result from them that's negative, right? I don't then go on diets or try to lose weight or then shame myself and binge or whatever. So the thoughts come up, but that's fine. I don't react to them. I don't respond to them. So they're not creating results for me in my life, right? I'm not engaging with them.

But you, when you have these thoughts, you make it mean that there's a problem, you make it mean that it's a problem if they never go away, and you blame them for your outcomes, and you assume your outcomes are a

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problem. People who have amazing thoughts about love and being single and being in relationships also sometimes break up with people, even a second time. It doesn't mean something has gone wrong. So you've got a couple of layers of doing this work.

You got to do some work on your belief that something's gone wrong, that you're single, because you clearly do still believe that, right? And then you've got some work to do on your thinking about your own thinking. So, two levels at least to work on this on. The bottom line is you get to decide what to make it mean that these thoughts still come up, and you really have to grapple with you thinking that as long as you think that something has gone wrong here in your life and that there's a problem, you're going to have a really hard time every time these thoughts come up. So that's where I would start.

If you're loving what you're learning on the podcast, you have got to come check out *The Feminist Self-Help Society*. It's our newly revamped community and classroom where you get individual help to better apply these concepts to your life along with a library of next level blow your mind coaching tools and concepts that I just can't fit in a podcast episode. It's also where you can hang out, get coached and nerd out about all things thought work and feminist mindset with other podcast listeners just like you and me.

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